

## Documents on the allegation about lampshades made from human skin

☐ **Introduction:** parallel with the **legend** about Nazi factories boiling down corpses of their victims to manufacture human soap the story gained currency, thanks to the war crimes trials, that Nazi camp staff had made lampshades from human skins of their victims..

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

DATE: September 28, 1973  
REPLY TO ATTN. OF: NNDW

*National Archives and Records Service  
Washington  
National Records Center  
Washington, DC 20409*

SUBJECT: Family Chronicles (Photo Albums) of **Ilse Koch**

To: Director, General Archives Division &mdash; NNG

In the process of reviewing the records of the United States Army Judge Advocate General for the years 1939-1948 (RG 153, Entry 321-B), we have found the record of trial of Frau Ilse Koch who became infamous in post&mdash;World War II crime trials as the "Bitch of Buchenwald." One of the charges against Frau Koch was that of using the skin of concentration camp inmates, after suitable treatment and tanning, for various household decorative items. Among these were lamp shades, hand gloves, and photo albums.

We have found two photo albums which apparently figured in the prosecution's case against Frau Koch in FRG Box 1089 in this record group. Whether or not one of them is actually bound in human skin turned into a fine grade of suede leather may be open to conjecture, but the content of both albums are of considerable historical interest so far as they relate to the personal and family life of one of the most notorious of all of the concentration camp figures in the war crimes trials. Album No. 1 deals with the Koch "Family Chronicle" up until 1937 -- prior to Colonel Koch becoming commandant of Buchenwald; Album No. 2 commences with the Buchenwald years in 1938. As a side note to history, Colonel Koch was even too inhuman for the Nazis. He was tried by a Nazi military court in 1944 for a number of irregularities (most of which were financial) concerning his management of Buchenwald and executed.

In view of the historical value of these two items, we recommend that they be transferred from their present file location in the WNRC and re&mdash;located in the NARS Audio Visual collection concerned with captured enemy records.

WILLIAM B. FRALEY

Chief  
WNRC Review Branch

ORDER NUMBER

DOCUMENT RESTORATION \_\_\_\_\_

NNSP/82-19

SERVICE ORDER

DATE May 12 1982

REQUESTED BY

RGGP NUMBER

RECORD GROUP NUMBER 153

TELEPHONE NUMBER

AGSmith

18 N X33055

ADDRESS (If other than Archives Building)

KIND OF SERVICE REQUIRED

EXAMINATION

NNSP

**REPAIR OF BOUND VOLUMES**

APPROVAL (Head of Unit): -- Acting Chief

FLATTEN ONLY

NATP XX OTHER (See description of materials)

TO BE FILLED IN BY NA TP

Lv -- Test album cover for content composition

Album-RG 153 -- IK Ilse Koch/ album 2

Attn: Shahani

Call Betty Hill (on ext. above) if you have questions.

**REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES**

**University of Cincinnati**

Department of Basic Science in Tanning Research  
Tanners' Council Laboratory (#14)  
Cincinnati Ohio 45221

Phone (513) 281-8501

August 19, 1982

Mr. Chandru J. Shahani, Chief  
Technology Assistance Staff  
National Archives and Records  
General Services Administration  
Washington, DC 20408

Dear Mr. Shahani:

I attach our Report No. 9580 concerned with the small sample of book binding leather which you submitted with your letter of August 11. We regret that since the sample was sueded, we could only conclude that it originated from some large animal, but that a specific species identification was impossible.

Sincerely yours,

Robert M. Lollar  
Technical Director  
Tanners' Council of America

RML: j e c

Enclosure